



Master Sean Kim and Grandmaster Kim Soo with award plaques; On May 24, 1997 Grandmaster Kim Soo was inducted into the Texas Martial Arts Hall of Fame, as "Grandmaster of the Year." Chayon-Ryu was chosen as "Best School" in Texas for 1997 as well.

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## What's The Difference?

By Grandmaster Kim Soo, 10th. Dan & Founder, Chayon-Ryu Martial Arts  
Written by Sabomnim Graeme Cox

You want to get fit. Maybe learn some self defense techniques. You look in the Yellow Pages to see what's out there. So many schools and teachers, how do you know which one is right for you? Should you pick the closest one, the cheapest, the one with the most trophies?

The first real question to ask yourself is "What am I looking for?"

Judo, full-contact karate, kung-fu, Olympic style taekwondo, aerobic kickboxing, or a traditional martial art such as Chayon-Ryu. Many people have heard these names but don't really know what the differences are between them.

In the 1960's, Judo was the popular martial art. Americans are tall which makes the lower back particularly vulnerable to injuries sustained by constant and repeated falls. Many students got hurt during training, which led to the decline in judo's popularity.

In the early 1970's, karate became the popular name. Full contact karate and kickboxing is extremely violent. As the name suggests, when you get hit, it is with the full force of your opponent. While this may teach you what it is like to hit and get hit in a real situation, your time in this sport is surely limited due to the likelihood of receiving injuries.

With the popularity of Bruce Lee's movies in the mid-70's, many people became interested in kung-fu. Later, as he developed his own fighting style, Jeet Cune Do rose in popularity. Jeet Cune Do is a collection of fighting techniques, but there is very little philosophy associated with this style. While Bruce Lee's popularity created enormous exposure for the martial arts, the

hype of Hollywood has portrayed martial artists as merely skillful fighters.

Taekwondo became popular in the 1980's and Olympic style taekwondo is still very popular today. In fact, most taekwondo schools now teach this type because tournament competition is quite lucrative. Even if the practitioner does not wish to compete, this is still the emphasis of training. As such, the school consists largely of children and young adult males because the training is hard and aggressive. If you fall into these two categories then you may enjoy the experience. However, if you are a woman or an older adult, the training may not be optimal for your health or longevity. As with Judo, injuries in tournaments have cut into the martial art education of many students.

It is relatively easy to teach for tournaments. Many of these instructors have bloodied pictures of themselves showing they were "tough guys". They wear "fancy" uniforms with, brightly colored patches and flags to show their patriotism and loyalty to Korea and The United States. The main problems with this type of school is the emphasis on physical skills, without accompanying mental balance.

There are also winners and losers. The winners likely develop big egos in addition to their physical skills. The losers may develop low self esteem - something your martial arts training should be improving. At some point in the future, even the winners will become losers, and what then? Without accompanying mental growth during your training, you are unprepared for future circumstances.

In the early 90's, Aikido was made popular in the movies of Steven Segal. This "nonviolent" art uses the attackers force against them. Hapkido is the Korean translation of Aikido (Japanese).

A recent trend has been a flood of "aerobic" style pretend martial arts. With names like Aeroboxing, Kardio-Karate, Kardio Kick Boxing, and Tae Bo - these styles are at best the "fast food" of martial arts.

These classes are just a trendy variation of aerobic dance classes that first started gaining popularity in the 1980's. The aerobics class is all about fun and "instant gratification." These classes are set to music and designed to give you a cardiovascular workout. Benefits include improved fitness and flexibility.

And, while these exercises may teach some martial arts techniques, there is no deep understanding gained. In aerobics you just follow along with the general movements but you don't really think for yourself.

And with no intellectual involvement, the novelty soon wears off - look at how many trends there have been in aerobics; high and low impact, toning, step, and body pump to name a few. New aerobic "styles" are constantly being invented for public consumption.

Then there is Chayon-Ryu. A martial art that emphasizes natural human motion and breathing, designed to improve fitness and flexibility, to reinforce traditional values and philosophy.

Tournament and point sparring are not emphasized in Chayon-Ryu; a true martial artist knows that the real competition in life takes place within. On the other hand, practical self-defense is strongly emphasized. You learn how to react to real-world situations; avoiding, blocking, and striking to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Chayon-Ryu consists of several different martial arts, so you learn a wide variety of skills and techniques. After being taught the foundation movements, Chayon-Ryu training becomes

more of a mental, rather than a physical challenge. Through this type of training you gain a better mental and physical balance, improve your health and longevity, and enhance your lifestyle.

Of course this doesn't come easy, you have to practice sincerely, doing the best you can every time you train. That is what develops these qualities. The benefits of proper training are long term, the results don't appear immediately.

But with time and patience, you begin to realize the benefits that did not appear obvious when you started. These include self confidence and discipline, a positive attitude, indomitable spirit, a real belief in yourself. You'll discover that no matter what obstacles you face, or challenges you attempt, you can get through and achieve your goals. Your concentration and ability to focus on tasks will improve greatly. Your whole life will become more relaxed and calm - a new peacefulness that you never realized.

Training in Chayon-Ryu is an investment in yourself.

So which is right for you? Before you decide, here are some questions to ask your prospective instructor...

What is your background? Who were your teachers? How long have you been training and teaching? How long have you been at your locations? What values do you emphasize?

Ask to observe a typical class. Is it all children and young males? Do they meditate before class? Is fighting the primary concern?

Deciding where to train is like deciding which cup to drink from. Medicine water or poison - sometimes hard to tell without drinking, but there is an important difference.

The choice is yours.

